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ABSTRACT

Inclusive assessment and accountability for all students with disabilities has been a significant focus of educators for the past six years. Yet only 35 states reported 1999-2000 test results for students with disabilities on some of their state assessments. Although the areas of assessment and accountability are just one focus of IDEA 1997 and the recently passed No Child Left Behind Act, they still are an important foundation for providing equal access and opportunity to learn for all students, including students with disabilities. Most important, these areas provide the foundation on which improved curriculum and instruction can be built. This chapter looks briefly at some of the realities of the implementation of inclusive assessment and accountability from the school district perspective. (GCP)

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Assessment of and Accountability for Students With Disabilities: Putting Theory Into Practice

By
Judy Elliott

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Chapter 13
Assessment of and Accountability for Students With Disabilities
Putting Theory Into Practice

Judy Elliott

By now you have a thorough awareness and understanding of IDEA 1997 and the impact of its regulations on assessment and accountability programs for students with disabilities; however, the implementation from state to state and district to district, even in the same state, varies to an amazing degree. As we head into another reauthorization of IDEA, it is accurate to say that we, as a nation, have not fully implemented what we were legislated to do six years ago, but we have accomplished a great deal to better the education of students with disabilities.

In this chapter we will look briefly at some of the realities of the implementation of inclusive assessment and accountability from the school district perspective. The issues may vary from those in your district, or they may be similar or identical. Let this discussion be your guide to what is possible when you keep your eyes, energies, and passion on the target—inclusive assessment and accountability.

Inclusive assessment and accountability for all students with disabilities has been a significant focus of educators for the past six years. Yet only 35 states reported 1999–2000 test results for students with disabilities on some of their state assessments (Bielinski, Thurlow, Callendar & Bolt, 2001). Sixteen of these states reported participation and performance results for students with disabilities on all of their 1999–2000 assessments. To date most states report only the number of students with disabilities taking tests, without indicating what percentage of the total that number is; that practice is better known as drifting denominators and nimble numerators. Only nine states report participation rates, which not only include the number of students taking tests but also compare this number to the whole population of students with disabilities to illuminate how many are not taking tests. So we still do not really know how well students with disabilities are

performing according to what the law intended.

What we do know is that the spirit and integrity of IDEA implementation start in our own backyard—at the local level. It is up to local directors and assistant superintendents of special education, working with superintendents and boards of education, to ensure that all students are included in accountability and assessment. This effort to ensure inclusion is critical because the reality is that in many states, accountability and assessment policies do not always focus on all students, including students with disabilities. Loopholes abound. For example, peruse the following short list of critical knowledge for inclusive accountability and assessment and reflect on how much you and your administrators, counselors, teachers, and boards of education know about them:

- Teachers, counselors, and administrators know and understand what is required in terms of district and state assessments.
- Teachers, counselors, and administrators know who actually participates in what assessment, when they participate, and with what accommodations.
- Teachers, counselors, and administrators know how students with disabilities are included in published score reports and accountability reports.
- Teachers, counselors, and administrators know the subtleties of accommodation use and how those scores are reported. (For example, consider the automatic disaggregation or deletion of scores from accountability reports of the students who use certain accommodations.)
- Teachers, counselors, and administrators understand the reporting requirements of IDEA 1997 and its reflection of state assessment policies.

Indeed the areas of assessment and accountability are just one focus of IDEA 1997 and the recently passed No Child Left Behind Act, but they still are an important foundation for providing equal access and opportunity to learn for all students, including students with disabilities. Most important, these areas provide the foundation on which improved curriculum and instruction can be built.

The Rough Realities of Implementation

Let's explore some realities of implementing inclusive accountability and assessment practices at both the district and classroom levels. Do any of the following questions and comments from teachers, counselors, and site administrators ring true with your experiences in the trenches?

- "What happens if I allow one of my students a needed but nonstandard accommodation on the state test?"
- "No student in my classroom gets an accommodation or extended time in or out of my classroom on tests or assignments!"
- "Just how many days does 'extended time' encompass?"
- "You should have planned better for the graduation test administration. It is too late to give your students the accommodations written on their IEPs. We don't have the space, time, or personnel to provide them."
- "Sure, give your students any and all the accommodations they need for the state test!"
- "You know, if we get the parents to say they want to exempt their kids from the testing, we won't have to worry how they perform, and better yet, their scores won't be included."

The good, the bad, and the ugly, as the saying goes, and these are definitely the ugly but also the reality of what school districts and other sites deal with when trying to implement inclusive accountability. Now comes the hard part—effecting change.

Opportunity and Access

This is where it all begins—the opportunity to learn and the access to curriculum and quality instruction. There are a number of questions to ask yourself as you explore this area. For example, what standards are students in your school building and district working toward? How are these reflected in the curriculum? Are the two aligned? What curriculum are students with disabilities learning—same, different, or modified? If "modified" is your answer, then reflect on what exactly modified means and who makes the decisions about what is modified and to what degree. Is this left to teacher discretion? If it is, what aspects of the general education curriculum are allowed to be modified according to teacher discretion? The process and integrity of standards

and curriculum implementation should be the same for all students, including students with disabilities.

Education as a field has aggressively entered the arena of high-stakes testing where, in most states, students "do not pass go" if they do not pass the state test. This issue has grown to involve 22 states where graduation exams exist, a figure that changes daily. In other states and districts, benchmarks have been set whereby students may not be promoted to the next grade level unless they meet the requirement. The critical importance of opportunity to learn for all students is part of the focus of a current class-action lawsuit against the California Department of Education.

Legal Repercussions of Denying Opportunity and Access

In May 2001, Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) filed a class-action lawsuit *(Juleus Chapman et al. v. California Department of Education)* against the California Department of Education, challenging the state's high school exit exam (see Figure 1). Issues raised in this suit are (a) the failure to implement effective standards and procedures for ensuring that students with disabilities obtain reasonable accommodations they need on the exam; (b) the failure to align the subject matter tested with what students with disabilities are actually taught; and (c) the lack of an alternate assessment, as required by law, for students with disabilities who cannot demonstrate their skills on the high school exit exam, even with accommodations.

In spring 2002, the first administration of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) took place. Although the accommodation issue is, for the most part, resolved by allowing students to use any and all accommodations listed on their IEP plans or 504 plans for the CAHSEE, access to the same material tested and equal opportunity to learn is not. Let's face it: There are some folks who say it is hard enough to get the test scores up for the general population without worrying about students with disabilities. On the other hand, there are others who argue that we treasure what and whom we measure.

Figure 1. Notice Regarding Testing Accommodations and Modifications on the California High School Exit Exam

Notice to All Parents and Guardians of Children With an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan

The case *Juleus Chapman et al. v. California Department of Education et al.*, No. C01–1780 CRB, is currently pending in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Plaintiffs in the case, a group of learning disabled students, claim that the California High School Exit Exam (CASHEE), to be given to tenth graders on March 5, 6, and 7, 2002, violates rights guaranteed to learning disabled students under federal law. The Court has issued an Order that requires the March CAHSEE to be administered in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) Students shall be permitted to take the CAHSEE with any accommodation or modifications[1] their IEP or Section 504 plan specifically provides for the CAHSEE. If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan does not address the CAHSEE specifically, the student shall be permitted to take the CAHSEE with any accommodation or modifications their IEP or Section 504 plan provides for standardized testing. If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan does not address either the CAHSEE specially or standardized testing generally, the student shall be permitted to take the CAHSEE with any accommodation or modifications their IEP or Section 504 plan provides for general classroom testing.

(2) Some of the accommodations and modifications to which the students are entitled under this Order, pursuant to (1) above, have already been approved by the State. With regard to others, the State has determined that they will "invalidate" the test score and a waiver will be required before a diploma is granted. While this Order requires that students be permitted to take the CAHSEE with any accommodation or modifications defined in (1) above, the Court has not yet decided how taking the CAHSEE with a modification not approved by the State will affect the receipt of a diploma. A student may choose to forego

(Figure 1 cont.)

any accommodation or modification to which he or she is entitled under this Order.

(3) If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan specially provides for an alternate assessment in lieu of the CAHSEE, an alternate assessment shall be provided. If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan does not specifically address the CAHSEE but provides for an alternate assessment in lieu of generalized standardized testing, an alternate assessment to the CAHSEE shall be provided. If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan does not specifically address the CAHSEE or standardized testing but provides for an alternate assessment in lieu of general classroom testing, an alternate assessment to the CAHSEE shall be provided. Students entitled to an alternate assessment shall not be required to take the CAHSEE, but may do so if they choose.

(4) While this Order requires that an alternate assessment be provided to certain students, the Court has not yet decided how an alternate assessment will affect the receipt of a diploma.

(5) In order for a student covered by this Order to avail himself of any rights under this Order, no additional IEP or Section 504 plan meeting shall be necessary.

1. California has defined an *accommodation* as a change in the CAHSEE (in format, student response, timing, or other attribute) that does not invalidate the score achieved. California has defined a *modification* as a change in the CAHSEE that invalidates the test score because it fundamentally alters what the test measures.

What Educators Know

A good place to start in our effort to provide opportunity and access is in finding out what teachers, counselors, administrators, and others do and do not know about standards, instruction, and curriculum adaptation. We cannot assume that all teachers know how to adapt curriculum while maintaining the integrity of the standards. Research has shown that there are essential elements of effective instruction known to improve the academic achievement of students, including students with disabilities. In other words, good instruction is good instruction, regardless of the student. However, for many years, students with special needs have been placed in a separate environment, with

different curriculum and slower paced instruction than in the regular classrooms, when in fact these students needed the opposite—fast-paced instruction with precision teaching geared toward what all students should know and be able to do.

Indeed teachers and other educators know about good instruction and standards, but does that knowledge apply to teaching students with disabilities? Too often educators, including special education educators, believe that students with disabilities are not able to work toward the same standards and curriculum as students without disabilities. Too often educators are unaware of the exact nature of a disability, particularly how and when it may or may not affect learning.

Variation in interpretation of the law abounds. In one district, as the administration of the high-stakes exit exam came upon them, teachers of students with disabilities were unaware of accommodations or the need for them to be on the students' written IEPs. This occurred after hours of staff development, inservices, and topical forums on the requirements of IDEA, the state's graduation exam, and the essential elements of effective instruction. Amazingly enough, in some cases, teachers were still unaware that students with disabilities were required by law to be included in some assessment—either district and state or alternate assessments. In randomly perusing written IEPs, one administrator found the words "exempt for district/state testing" written into a student's IEP. This was five years after IDEA 1997.

The third largest urban school district in California, the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), with approximately 97,000 students, uses checklists created for teachers and administrators that are directly related to district initiatives of literacy and effective instruction (see Figure 2). These checklists reflect the elements of effective instruction as well as content-relevant indicators that have been taught through professional development training. In effect, these checklists allow both teachers and administrators to monitor the integrity and implementation of what has been provided through staff development programs and what is expected in the classroom.

Figure 2. Long Beach Unified School District's Components of Effective Instruction and Corresponding Checklist

Components of Effective Instruction

Planning Instruction

- The degree to which goals and expectations for performance and success are stated clearly and understood by the student

Managing Instruction

- The degree to which classroom management is effective and efficient
- The degree to which there is a sense of positiveness in the school environment

Delivering Instruction

- The degree to which there is an appropriate instructional match
- The degree to which lessons are presented clearly and follow specific instructional procedures
- The degree to which instructional support is provided for the individual student
- The degree to which sufficient time is allocated to academics and instructional time is used efficiently
- The degree to which the students' opportunity to respond is high

Evaluating Instruction

- The degree to which the teacher actively monitors student progress and understanding
- The degree to which student performance is evaluated appropriately and frequently

Reprinted from Algozzine, B., Ysseldyke, J., & Elliott, J. (1997). *Strategies and tactics for effective instruction.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

(Fig.2 cont.)

Checklist of Critical Factors for Effective Instruction

Planning: The degree to which goals and expectations for performance and success are stated clearly and understood by the student

Effective teachers:

_____ Set clear goals
_____ Set high expectations
_____ Demand high success rates
_____ Check for student understanding
_____ Provide direct and frequent feedback

Managing: The degree to which classroom management is effective and efficient

Effective teachers:

_____ Select 5–7 classroom expectations and procedures, and explicitly communicate expectations about classroom behavior
_____ Handle behavioral disruptions promptly
_____ Have an ongoing surveillance system
_____ Develop a sense of accountability and responsibility in their students

Effective classrooms are those in which:

_____ Well-established instruction routines are used
_____ Transitions are brief
_____ Considerable time is allocated to instruction
_____ Classroom interruptions are held to a minimum

Managing: The degree to which there is sense of positiveness in the school environment

Effective school environments are those in which there is:

_____ An academic focus with a humanistic orientation
_____ A cooperative rather than competitive learning structure
_____ Strong administrative leadership

(Fig.2 cont.)

_____ Parent-teacher contact and collaboration
_____ A belief among teachers that students can learn
_____ A set of realistic, high expectations

Delivering: The degree to which there is an appropriate instructional match

Effective teachers:

_____ Identify the student's level of skill development
_____ Analyze the demands of classroom tasks
_____ Match tasks to student aptitudes
_____ Analyze learning conditions in the classroom
_____ Assign tasks that are relevant to instructional goals
_____ Ensure high student success rates
_____ Check for student understanding

Delivering: The degree to which lessons are presented clearly and follow specific instructional procedures

Effective teachers:

_____ Use a demonstration-prompt-practice sequence
_____ Make instruction explicit
_____ Check for student understanding
_____ Systematically apply principles of learning

Delivering: The degree to which instructional support is provided for the individual student

Effective teachers:

_____ Monitor and adjust instruction
_____ Model thinking skills
_____ Teach learning strategies
_____ Provide time needed to learn
_____ Provide considerable guided practice

12

(Fig.2 cont.)

Delivering: The degree to which sufficient time is allocated to academics and instructional time is used efficiently

Effective teachers:

_____ Allocate sufficient time to instruction
_____ Get students actively engaged
_____ Engage in frequent, high-intensity student-teacher interaction

Delivering: The degree to which the students' opportunity to respond is high

Effective teachers:

_____Provide many opportunities to respond
_____ Provide specific error correction
_____ Alternate teaching strategies

Evaluating:The degree to which the teacher actively monitors student progress and understanding

Monitoring must be

_____ Active
_____ Frequent

Evaluating: The degree to which student performance is evaluated appropriately and frequently

Evaluation must be:

_____ Frequent
_____ Congruent with what is taught

Reprinted from Algozzine, B, Ysseldyke, J., & J. Elliott (1997). *Strategies and tactics for effective instruction.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Staff Development and Training

What does training in your district or building look and sound like? In LBUSD, all staff development is offered and conducted for both general and special educators together as one group. Staff development is often collaborative and conducted by the general education curriculum coaches and special education personnel. Teachers at all grade levels are trained in content areas, including literacy, and monitored for their implementation of what they learned. There is no separate curriculum or way to teach students with disabilities except that which is highly specialized for specific populations (such as picture exchange communication systems for autistic students). Although the content for students who are learning life skills may be different, the instructional strategies and the essential elements of instruction remain the same. The result is that teachers are now collaborating and conversing more than ever before and are able to share ideas and successful teaching methodologies.

Instruction and Assessment Accommodations: Who Gets Them? Who Decides?

One of the biggest challenges facing schools in the area of assessment is whether and how to accommodate students with disabilities for instruction and for classroom, district, and state assessments. Once again, the interpretation and application of accommodations vary widely.

As you know, an *accommodation* is a change in the way a test is administered. There are six basic areas of accommodations: the way the test is presented, the setting in which it is taken, the manner in which students respond, the timing of the test, the schedule of test administration, and other, which is a category for accommodations that don't not fit neatly into the first five areas. (See chapter 7 for a more complete discussion of accommodation categories.)

The variation in interpretation of accommodations is evident in several court cases, including one recently decided by the federal district court of Oregon. In February 1999, a class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of students with learning disabilities who attend Oregon public schools (*Advocates for Special Kids [ASK] v. Oregon State Board of Education*). Among the many allegations, the one that clearly stood out the most addressed the accommodations allowed for the state assessment. (*Modifications* is the term for not allowed, or nonstandard,

accommodations in Oregon.) At the time of the lawsuit, Oregon used a list of accommodations and modifications. Accommodations were allowed, whereas modifications were said to change the test construct, or what the test was measuring, and therefore were not allowed. This meant that if a student with a learning disability needed a modification to take the assessment, it would be granted, but the student's test score would not be valid. However, the judge overseeing the case, based on a report from a court-appointed blue ribbon panel (Elliott, Engelhard, Schrag & Vogel, 2000), found that the list of accommodations was too narrow. Additionally, the list of modifications had been developed based on extant accommodation research but not accommodation research in the context of the state test. Therefore, there was no available research to show that the list of modifications in fact invalidated the constructs of the state's assessment. In the end, the judge ruled that all accommodations (and modifications) be considered valid unless and until research provides evidence that a modification or nonstandard accommodation altered the construct that the test was measuring. (For further discussion, see the Oregon Department of Education website at http://www.ode.state.or.us/. A copy of the blue ribbon panel report is available at http://www.ode.state.or.us/sped/report.pdf.)

Not only has this class-action suit proved to be the nation's landmark case surrounding accommodations, it has made many states and assessment personnel pause to reflect on whether they are next to be called into court for similar issues. The same attorneys, for almost identical allegations, have in fact called the California Department of Education into court, as discussed previously. If a student uses a nonstandard accommodation on California's required SAT9 state assessment, the score gets kicked out of the system and doesn't count in the district's accountability performance index (API). It is just as though the student did not take the assessment at all. Of course, this practice is not unique to California. It is one of the loopholes folks have found to keep test scores up and students with disabilities out.

Teachers have been known to be reluctant, even vehemently opposed, to allowing students accommodations on tests, state or classroom, and on assignments. That reluctance is most often due to lack of understanding or misinformation about the law, the IEP or 504 process, and the purpose and need for accommodations. Furthermore, although IEP teams make accommodation decisions, these teams are not always informed or knowledgeable about how or on what to base these decisions. The trend over the past few years has been for IEP teams to use checklists to guide decisions (see Thurlow, Elliott, &

Ysseldyke, 1998). Another tool that has helped the integrity of accommodation decision making is an IEP page tailored to making these decisions (see Figure 3). By tailoring an IEP to cover assessments and accommodations, we can better ensure that all parties on the IEP team are aware of what assessments are required and what accommodation may be needed for instruction, classroom tests, and district and state assessments.

In LBUSD, the development and use of a new accommodations for assessment page has improved not only the integrity of decision making, but also the appropriate use of accommodations for students. In one year's time the use of accommodations as a whole, including nonstandard accommodations, on the SAT9 dropped by approximately 6 percent. In addition, approximately 1,200 more students took the SAT9 than had taken it the year before. The significance of this statistic is that not only did more students take the required assessment, but more test scores of students with disabilities were included in score reports and in school and district API reports

Although not the focus of this chapter, it would be remiss not to mention the alternate assessment. As mentioned, the use of the new, improved IEP led LBUSD to show incredible assessment participation. The district has developed a standards-based alternate assessment that encompasses several broad domains. It is administered during the same testing window as the state assessment, and it is a secured assessment that is performance based, scored with a rubric, and monitored through inter-rater reliability. We have per-student, classroom, grade-level, domain-area, and building alternate assessment test data. The overall participation and accommodation data for this assessment and the SAT9 are shown in Figure 4. Only 4 percent of students with disabilities (in the third largest urban school district in California) were not tested at all. Some of you may be skeptical about these data; others of you may be eager to know how we as a district accomplished this. Read on.

Figure 3. Long Beach Unified School District IEP Form Example

Student Name _____
Last First

IEP Date ____/____/____ Page ____ of ____

Supplementary aids, services, and other support required to access general education curriculum

Timing of Instruction	Scheduling of Instruction	Presentation of Instruction	Response to Instruction	Setting of Instruction	Other
Subject: _____ Subject: _____					

XV. DISTRICT/STATE ASSESSMENT

Student will participate in the:

☐ SAT9 ☐ Without Accommodations ☐ With Accommodations (see below)

☐ District Assessments ☐ Without Accommodations ☐ With Accommodations (see below)

☐ Alternate Assessment (must use IEP page 9 - Participation Criteria)

SAT9 Participation

STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS	All Content Areas	Reading (All Grades)	Math (All Grades)	Language (All Grades)	Spelling (Grades 1-8)	History (Grades 9-11)	Science (Grades 9-11)
Flexible Setting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Large Print Test	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Out of Level Testing (one grade level only)	☐						
Revised Test Directions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
NONSTANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS							
Braille Test	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flexible scheduling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of Aids and/or Aides to Interpret Test Items	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Partial Participation		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

OTHER ASSESSMENTS

Test	Timing	Scheduling	Presentation	Response	Setting

LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Form #IEP8 Distribution: Special Education Office—White; Special Education Teacher—Pink; Parent—Yellow; CUM—Blue

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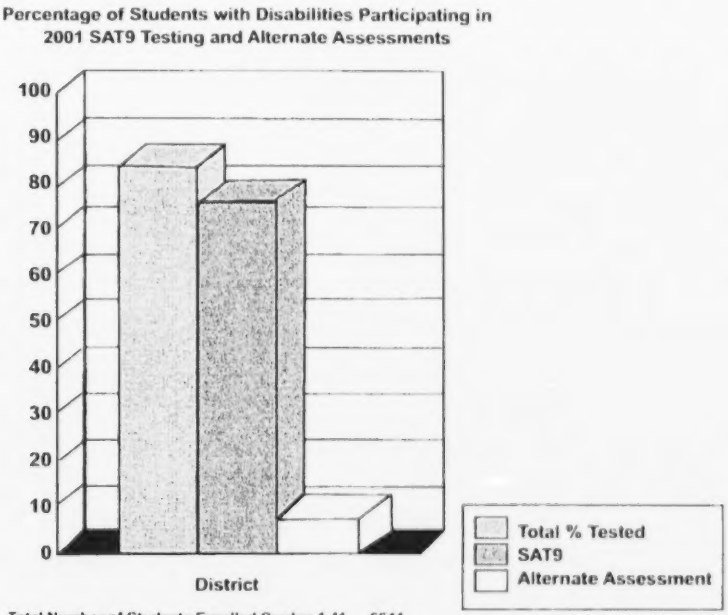
Figure 4. Long Beach Unified School District Graph of Students with Disabilities Participation Rates in 2001 SAT9 and Alternate Assessments



Total Number of Students Enrolled Grades 1-11	6644
Total Number of Students Tested Grades 1-11	6467 (97%)
Total Number of Students Tested with SAT9	5884 (91%)
Total Number Tested with Alt. Assessment	583 (9%)
Total Number of Students Not Tested	177 (3%)
Total Number of Students Enrolled	7711

Where the Rubber Meets the Road: The Use of Data to Drive Reform

As discussed, the spirit and integrity with which IDEA 1997 is implemented begins at the local level. Here's how LBUSD made changes within a two-year assessment cycle. We began by working with our research and student evaluation office to get our hands on district and state assessment data for students with disabilities. These data included participation rates, accommodations used, and test results. What follows is a list of what we did and continue to do with the data on a yearly basis:

- Disaggregate all district and state assessment data for students with disabilities: We disaggregate by type of service provided. For example, students who receive speech and language therapy services only, those who are in self-contained programs, or those receiving resource room services. We also look at the data by disability, individual grade level (such as grade four), and overall grade levels (such as elementary, middle, and high school). And, of

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course, we can look at data by gender, ethnicity, and the like.

- Disaggregate test results by accommodations used: We look at what accommodations are most requested, how often, at what levels of service delivery, and at what grade levels. We examine the combinations of accommodations requested for assessments and specific subtests. For example, some students are allowed a special location, extended time, and use of a calculator. We look for patterns and trends among grade levels and subtests. (Depending on the type of norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests your state or district administers, accommodations used will vary widely.)

The usual trend in LBUSD is that there are a few accommodations that are used most frequently, and there is a decrease in use as grade levels go up. For example, high school students often show a drop in accommodation usage. Part of our work has been to find out why. Is it because students do not need them? Don't want them? The IEP team didn't think they were necessary? Didn't know what was allowed or where to write them on the IEP?

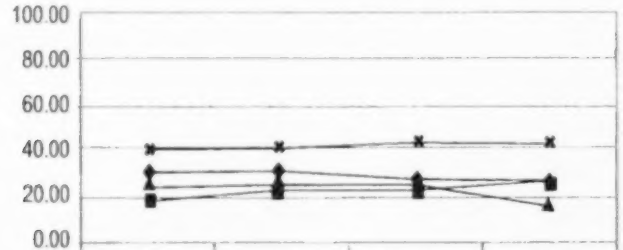
Another interesting analysis we do is to select IEPs randomly and look at what accommodations were written in the document, then cross-reference this to what was actually used on the district and state assessments. We also do the opposite, looking at the test accommodations recorded as being used, then cross-referencing them to student IEPs to see if what was actually provided for the test was written in the IEP. Try a similar analysis of your own district's data. You will be amazed at what you find. We were.

We compare the normal curve equivalent or percentile rank by assessment and subtests between general education and special education populations by individual grade level and overall grade levels. We typically find a parallel performance trend, with students in special education achieving at a similar level to each other but below the general education population. This trend may or may not be the same across overall grade levels. We look at individual school profiles, grade level profiles, and so forth to see where the gap is smallest, then dig deep to find out why. It is here we discover what is working to improve student achievement.

We create individual building profiles of student achievement by students who receive only related services, are in a self-contained setting, or are served by resource services (Figure 5). On the same graphic

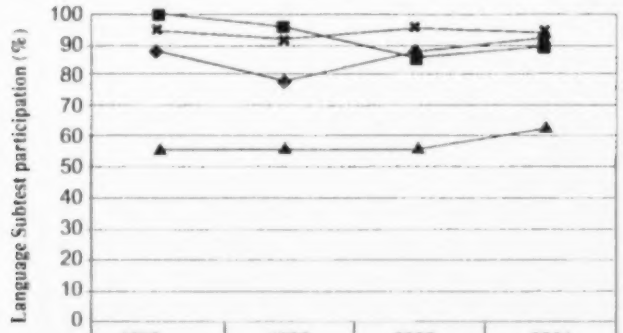
profile we superimpose the general education population scores for the same school. We also create graphic profiles to illustrate and compare the percentages of these student populations that participated in the test. This past year we were able to provide four years of data on one school's profile (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Stanford 9 Reading Subtest scores by student population, 1998-2001



	1998	1999	2000	2001
Related SVCS	28.94	30.04	27.08	25.59
Resource SVCS	16.98	20.70	22.87	24.86
Self-contained Class	24.26	24.53	25.51	16.90
General ed.	39.75	40.45	42.98	42.58

Figure 6. Percentage of students taing the Stanford 9 Language Subtest, by population, 1998-2001



	1998	1999	2000	2001
Related SVCS	100%	95	86	88
Resource SVCS	88	79	88	91
Self-contained Class	58	58	57	63
General ed.	95	93	96	93

Then we present these data by school and overall district comparison in a condensed, easy-to-read format to each school principal. When we did this for the first time in LBUSD, we blew folks away. Discussions were rich: "You mean my resource kids outperformed many of my general education kids?" "Look at that, the kids in the self-contained classes outperformed the kids in resource rooms!" "Wow, 'these' kids could really improve my accountability performance index!" By using these data we were able to show our principals through statistics that the best way to raise their site's API scores is to increase the test scores of students in the lowest deciles. Although kids with special needs are not the only ones in this score range, we made our point.

We also present the same information to those who supervise school principals, so that they can focus on the achievement of all students and keep all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities, on the standards-based instruction path. As discussed earlier, too often teachers of students with disabilities are not supervised as closely as other teachers by site administrators just because of the general lack of knowledge and misunderstandings about teaching students with disabilities. This data-sharing process helps everyone stay focused on what counts—effective instruction.

Administrators and teachers are now more accountable to providing access to the standards and curriculum all students should know. Not only has the participation of students with disabilities in district and state assessments increased, with appropriate use of accommodations where necessary, the quality of IEPs has improved. Through this data-sharing process and other efforts, student IEPs are now evaluated more precisely using progress monitoring and benchmarking—just like the evaluation process used with general education students.

Indeed, implementation issues of IDEA 1997, even six years later, still loom large and at times seem insurmountable. Inclusive assessment and accountability is but one of the important components that educators advocate for all students. Our job as educators is like no other. It often requires a delicate balancing act between compliance and student achievement. However, if we focus only on compliance, that is what we will get. But if we focus on instruction, accountability, and standards-based student achievement, we get it all.

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